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**AFGHANISTAN**

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Public Information Office: +93-(0)700-234-236 x4454

E-mail: [kabulusaidinformation@usaid.gov](mailto:kabulusaidinformation@usaid.gov)

<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

# FACT SHEET

## Learning for Community Empowerment Program (LCEP-2)

### OVERVIEW

Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. It is estimated that only 37 percent of men and 10 percent of women in rural areas are literate. Low literacy hampers development efforts by limiting potential for upward mobility in the workforce. The main objective of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in its National Education Strategic Plan II (NESP II) for 2010-2014 is to increase the national literacy rate from 26 percent to 48 percent (43 percent female and 54 percent male).

USAID's Learning for Community Empowerment Program (LCEP-2) is a four-year project that teaches literacy in the context of lifelong learning and community economic empowerment in rural and urban settings. LCEP-2 instruction offers literacy and numeracy education, vocational and business development skills, and financial literacy through self-help savings and investment groups. LCEP-2 works in alignment with the self-help priorities of the MoE as stated in the NESP II. LCEP-2 supports capacity building at the MoE and the establishment of a National Literacy Program (NLP). Also, technical assistance to help develop and scale up the community-based component of the NLP constitutes a key component of LCEP-2.

### CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Provide five technical advisors to support the implementation of NLP
- Develop a NLP framework and institutionalize systems for student assessment, literacy teacher accreditation, national teacher training and support, monitoring and evaluation, and general management and coordination
- Develop learning materials on topics of general interest, such as microfinance management, entrepreneurship practices, and hygiene
- Establish learning centers that provide integrated vocational skills, literacy, numeracy education, and savings and investment programs for older youth and adults (with a target of 60 percent women)
- Conduct training programs for self-help savings and investment groups in how to invest their savings and improve livelihoods

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established 9,234 learning centers in 20 provinces, covering 2,495 communities in 103 districts, with approximately 223,000 students enrolled
- Formed 10,290 self-help savings and investment groups with total savings of about \$1 million
- Developed a set of integrated literacy and productive skills materials (34 chapters)
- Provided training to 20 lead trainers, 40 provincial trainers, 250 district trainers, 40 productive skills assistants, and 5,000 village facilitators
- Analyzed the policies and resources of the MoE's Literacy Department in order to improve teacher and student certification systems